

**Minutes of Community Workgroup Meeting #8**  
**Tuesday, July 24, 2001**  
**Perkins High School Cafeteria**

The meeting began at 7 PM. Present were the following Workgroup members: John Blakeman; Janet Bohne; Mark Bohne; Ralph Roshong; Stan Taylor and Bill Walker. Also present were: Sally Harrington, Keith Peecook and Frank Greco from NASA; Wes Watson, Steve Nielson and Elizabeth Carver from USACE; Mike Schmoldt and Mark Boice from Montgomery Watson Harza; Dave Forth and Mike Quintin from SAIC and Susan Santos and Michael Morgan from FOCUS GROUP. Also attending were reporter Brad Dicken from the Sandusky Register and five members of the public, including NASA retirees Jack Crooks and Len Homyak.

Keith Peecook provided a welcome and introduction to the meeting and was followed by Mike Schmoldt, who gave a brief safety presentation. He mentioned NASA's participation in the Erie County Emergency Management Agency's full scale emergency exercise, held in May outside the main gate at Plum Brook Station (PBS), and that NASA would be providing some follow-up training for emergency responders. He also pointed out that, to date, project employees had worked 7,899 hours without work related illness or injury.

After Mike's presentation, Susan Santos asked if Workgroup members accept the April meeting minutes and they voted to accept the minutes. Susan also reviewed and briefly discussed the July meeting agenda, which also met with Workgroup approval.

Frank Greco followed with a Decommissioning Update. He said NASA's Operations Plan for Decommissioning – which also included plans for health and safety, radiation safety, quality assurance, waste management and site access and control – had been signed on May 1 and that the project's Operational Readiness Review (ORR) had been conducted on May 24. He also reported that mobilization for decommissioning began on June 4, with pre-decommissioning work commencing on June 28. Frank added that NASA was scheduled to meet with Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) officials in mid-August to discuss technical specifics relating to the Decommissioning Plan and estimated approval from the NRC late this fall.

Pre-Decommissioning

Keith Peecook gave an extensive slide presentation on pre-decommissioning (a copy of which was provided to attendees). He said loose equipment from all seven "Hot Cells" had been successfully removed and packaged in special containers and then safely stored in a designated area within the Reactor Facility. It is scheduled for shipment in early to mid-August to the Alaron reprocessing facility in Wampum, PA.

Keith's presentation detailed NASA's commitment to safety, as slides noted the protective suits and equipment (including respirators) worn by the work crew. As an example, he noted that once a Hot Cell was opened, the first step was to check its radiation level and compare it to the expected level, adding, "If it's different, you back out." He also pointed to continuous air monitoring within the Reactor Facility and the personnel dosimeters worn by the crew.

According to Keith, the loose equipment in the cells included machinery to process samples, various containers and a fuel element cart. He said, "We had a list of what we expected to find," in the Hot Cells, but added, "we had no intention of removing anything (containing) cadmium or liquids," as the latter materials will be removed during the actual decommissioning. He noted that containers into which the equipment was placed were lined with heavy plastic, which, after

being filled, would be hermetically sealed and then covered with the top of the box. The loaded containers will be surveyed for radiation before shipping and then the shipping company will conduct an additional survey before its truck departs for Alaron.

Keith said the shipment, which will be loaded onto one truck, will follow a route that will keep the truck on NASA property until it exits the Scheid Road gate, then travels south on US 250 until it reaches the Oho Turnpike and then the Pennsylvania Turnpike to Wampum. Keith termed Alaron “an impressive facility,” noting that it accepted and reprocessed low-level radioactive waste from the Walt’s Mills reactor decommissioning project. He explained how, by utilizing reprocessing, NASA can send less radioactive waste to disposal facilities such as Envirocare in Utah and Chem Nuclear in Barnwell, SC, thus saving limited landfill space and “saving us and the taxpayers money.”

Other work being conducted during pre-decommissioning involves the use of a remote camera to view inside the Hot Dry Storage area of the reactor facility in order to better inventory and characterize the material contained within. While NASA had initially planned to remove the Hot Dry Storage materials, place them in a special cask and ship them to a licensed disposal facility, Keith said this work will become part of the actual decommissioning. He said the primary purpose of pre-decommissioning was to “check the systems, adding that “there was no driving need,” to undertake Hot Dry Storage removal and disposal this summer, since deferring these tasks will have “no effect” on the overall Decommissioning Project.

Keith also briefly discussed some findings on pre-decommissioning, pointing out that although the estimated worker exposure for the Hot Cell cleanup under the ALARA (As Low As Reasonably Allowable) standards was estimated at 200 millirems, the actual figure was only 8 millirems, which he attributed to the fact that “we went in, did the job and got out.” He said that pre-decommissioning proved “the work planning process works.”

Keith then gave a presentation on personnel monitoring for site workers, and air and environmental monitoring in and around the Reactor Facility. NASA is continuously monitoring air inside the Reactor Facility as well as members of the work crew and requires anyone going in and out of the Reactor Facility to pass through two monitors. NASA is also continuing to monitor the air both inside and outside the Reactor Facility fence line and water and silt outside the fence line. Monthly water and silt sampling began in April, with the results sent to the GEL Labs in Atlanta for analysis while weekly air samples are analyzed at PBS. Keith said the first round of samples was taken “to establish background levels,” adding that monitoring results have been “in line with normal background levels...what we expected.”

#### Community Relations Update

Sally Harrington addressed NASA’s recent Community Relations efforts, mentioning the pre-decommissioning update (one page piece of literature plus a letter) that was sent in early June to some 200 near neighbors who live within a 1.5 miles of the PBS fence line. Local officials and Workgroup members were also included in this mailing. She also noted that the 24-hour, toll-free Decommissioning Information Line (1-800-260-3838) was operational as of July 8. Sally reported that the Information Line consists of project updates and features three mailboxes: one for to request fact sheets; one to request inclusion on the NASA mailing list, and one to leave a comment or question for a NASA staff person. The line is checked daily.

The toll-free number was included on the press release announcing the line, as well as on display advertisements and Public Service Announcements for the Workgroup meeting. Sally reported

that, as of July 24 there had been no messages left, a fact she attributed to the comfort level the public seems to have regarding the Decommissioning Project. She asked Workgroup members to check out the line and provide NASA with comments on it, adding that NASA can track the number of Line “hits” via its Telecommunications Office.

Mark Bohne said the feedback he gets from members of the public is such that “They know the emphasis of the (Decommissioning) project is on safety... This should be the model for the EPA’s stakeholder identification and outreach efforts,” a comment which brought agreement from fellow Workgroup member John Blakeman. Sally said she views the Workgroup as a liaison between NASA and the general public and stressed the importance of members reaching out to their constituencies. John then observed, “When people ask me about (the Workgroup), I tell them we’re meeting with NASA...and they are confident and have no questions,” about decommissioning. Mark added that “people are seeing the (NASA) ads in the paper, they see the (Information Line) number and they know they can be hooked up to Tim Polich’s office...I applaud what’s happening with this project. This is true interaction.”

Sally touched upon several other community outreach avenues including the fact sheet on the Transportation of Low-level Radioactive Waste. She pointed out that a “generic” version had been published in 1999 but that a new version with updated and PBS-specific information had recently been published. [Note: The June 2001 version was pulled from distribution for further revisions and the revised version will be published in October]. Sally also said she and Keith had recently spoken to the Berlin Heights Kiwanis Club in a “well received” engagement that also included a video presentation on the Decommissioning Project. She also briefly discussed updates made to the Decommissioning Website based on suggestions from Janet Bohne. Sally pointed out that updates have been and will continue to be made.

Sally reported that NASA has started to put together a layout for the initial edition of the quarterly Decommissioning Newsletter, which will be published in October. She added that it will be sent to everyone on the Decommissioning Project mailing list, which has approximately 1,400 names. Susan Santos noted that a regular feature of the newsletter will be an interview with a member of the Workgroup, “to truly give the community your perspective” on the project, then asked for input on the publication’s content. Mark suggested a piece on safety aspects of the project and suggested that “the end goal (of the newsletter) is not just to have talking heads using technical terms,” about decommissioning. Sally responded that an article on monitoring for safety will be part of the first edition. Janet Bohne suggested that a tour of the Reactor Facility be conducted and then written about. Susan said the latter would be discussed next, then urged the Workgroup to suggest “other ways to better reach the public.”

#### Next Workgroup Meeting/Reactor Tour

Susan said NASA wanted to tie the next Workgroup meeting into the next Community Information Session (CIS), which is scheduled for Tuesday, October 23, 7:30-9 PM at the Perkins High School cafeteria. Susan said she’d like to have as many Workgroup members as possible attend a limited tour of the Reactor Facility before the CIS, to “see the things that we talk about,” then attend the CIS. She suggested that the tour would take the place of a sit-down Workgroup meeting. She asked if the group would like a tour and there was unanimous approval. [Note: Due to the events of September 11, 2001, and the resultant increases in security requirements for Federal Government Facilities, the Workgroup tour has been postponed to a date and time to be determined when conditions allow].

The Workgroup agreed that the meeting/tour should start at 5 PM to compensate for decreasing daylight and also agreed with Susan's request that they also attend the CIS, so that when visitors to the later event ask about the Reactor Facility, Workgroup members could give their perspectives. Keith said it would also be worthwhile to have some NASA retirees on the tour. Mark also suggested that retirees be part of not only the tour but part of the Workgroup as well. Susan reviewed the pro's and con's of retiree membership on the Workgroup, including the possible criticism of the public that those who work – or worked – for NASA would be more favorable biased toward NASA than general community members, but she expressed a willingness to open up the Workgroup to NASA retirees if there were an interest, and Workgroup members agreed. Keith urged retirees to contact the Decommissioning Team if they wanted to attend the Reactor Tour but noted that it could not be opened up to the general public, said he would get a list of people to invite from Sally and work with PBS security to establish an access list at the front gate. Susan said NASA will also invite former Workgroup members to participate in the tour.

#### Meeting Attendance by Alternates

The Workgroup also addressed the question of whether members who cannot attend a particular meeting could send an alternate in their place. New member Deborah Alex-Saunders had asked if there were a policy on designees. Susan noted the pro's and con's to this issue, saying that on the one hand, allowing alternates to attend would further "get the word out" on the project. But on the other hand, she said alternates might not be "up to speed" on project discussion. She asked if the practice should be allowed and, if so, how frequently. Mark observed that the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) for the former Ordnance facility (that operated at what is now PBS) has a "purging process for non-active members" over a three-year term. [Note: Workgroup members do not serve a designated term length but members are asked each year about their desire to continue]. Overall, the members present did not think allowing alternates was necessary. Susan asked Workgroup members to think about a policy before the next meeting and said NASA would continue to send members a letter on continuing their membership each year.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.